

ALL BRIEFING

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

M

1 December 1964

SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

I. Coup of General Hinh highlights Bao Dai's growing tendency to throw in lot with U.S.

- Immediate cause of action presumably Hinh's statement to press he would return Saigon whatever Bao Dai's decision may be.
- Terms of dismissal decree, charging Hinh with disobedience, indicate Bao Dai abandoning earlier equivocal stand.

II. Army-government reconciliation will not result automatically, Hinh capable of causing further trouble.

- Once stated he would oppose Diem politically if fired.
- Recently boasted he could carry out coup from Paris by telegram.
- Reportedly had systematically begun putting his own men in as unit commanders before leaving for Paris.
- Tension within army still high despite smoothing over of recent pro-Diem demonstration.
- Generally fly recently voiced suspicion that acting chief of staff Vy had sworn loyalty to Hinh. Expressed fear Diem-Hinh feud might be replaced by Diem-Vy dispute.

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A. Why does in fact lack Diem's confidence.

III. Actually, Hinh is political lightweight, but French backing could offset this.

A. French officials who have backed Hinh could switch to other anti-Diem champions.

B. French army officers have vested interest in continuance of anti-Diem feeling in army, since Diem favors US takeover of training responsibility.

C. Recent official French broadcast from Saigon criticized Diem, warned Viets against "heavy hand" of US. [Vietnam army radio, before and since Hinh's departure, has followed same line.] No

IV. Meanwhile, Viet Minh making capital of chaos in south.

A. Viet Minh propagandists exploiting Vietnam army radio criticism of Diem as instance of US bolstering of unpopular government.

B. Viet Minh continuing to consolidate shadow government over much of southern Vietnam despite formal troop withdrawal.